

Desk Statement
Vermiculite Products Site
Asbestos Contamination Identified in Adjacent Property

EPA is coordinating with the City of Houston, Harris County and the Texas Department of State Health to protect human health in the community. EPA has initiated assessment activities at the Vermiculite Products Inc. Site. The Vermiculite Products, Inc. facility received raw vermiculite ore from the Zonolite Mountain Mine in Libby Montana which was discovered to contain asbestos. The vermiculite ore contains Libby amphibole asbestos which has been linked to lung cancer and mesothelioma.

As part of its assessment activities EPA is looking at nearby locations where asbestos may have migrated either through air deposition or through use as fill. During a recent site visit EPA observed that redevelopment in the community is happening at a rapid pace, including properties adjacent to the Site where air deposition, or contaminated fill use, might have occurred. Because of the potential for soil disturbing activities associated with construction which may have resulted in aerosolizing asbestos fibers; EPA is placing emphasis on investigating identified off site properties for sampling.

EPA was notified on December 20, 2013 that soil disturbing redevelopment activities had been initiated at the property immediately adjacent to the Site. The developer had scraped a layer of soil, storing it in onsite stockpiles. The EPA contacted the property owner, explained the concerns regarding disturbing potentially asbestos contaminated soil and was able to take quick action to sample the property.

Sample results indicated actionable levels of Libby amphibole asbestos in the stockpiled soil. In order address the risk of exposure EPA plans to take immediate action to eliminate contact with contaminated soil in the stockpiles. Additional assessment is required to determine if further soil removal is necessary both onsite and offsite.

EPA will be working with your local community to keep you informed about current and future activities related to this Site.

EPA will implement an aggressive and comprehensive sampling plan in the community, to identify and eliminate any potential threat to human health, from asbestos contaminated soil.